Chapter 4

Transportation Planning Process and Stakeholder Involvement Process

Transportation Planning and Stakeholder Involvement Process

Introduction

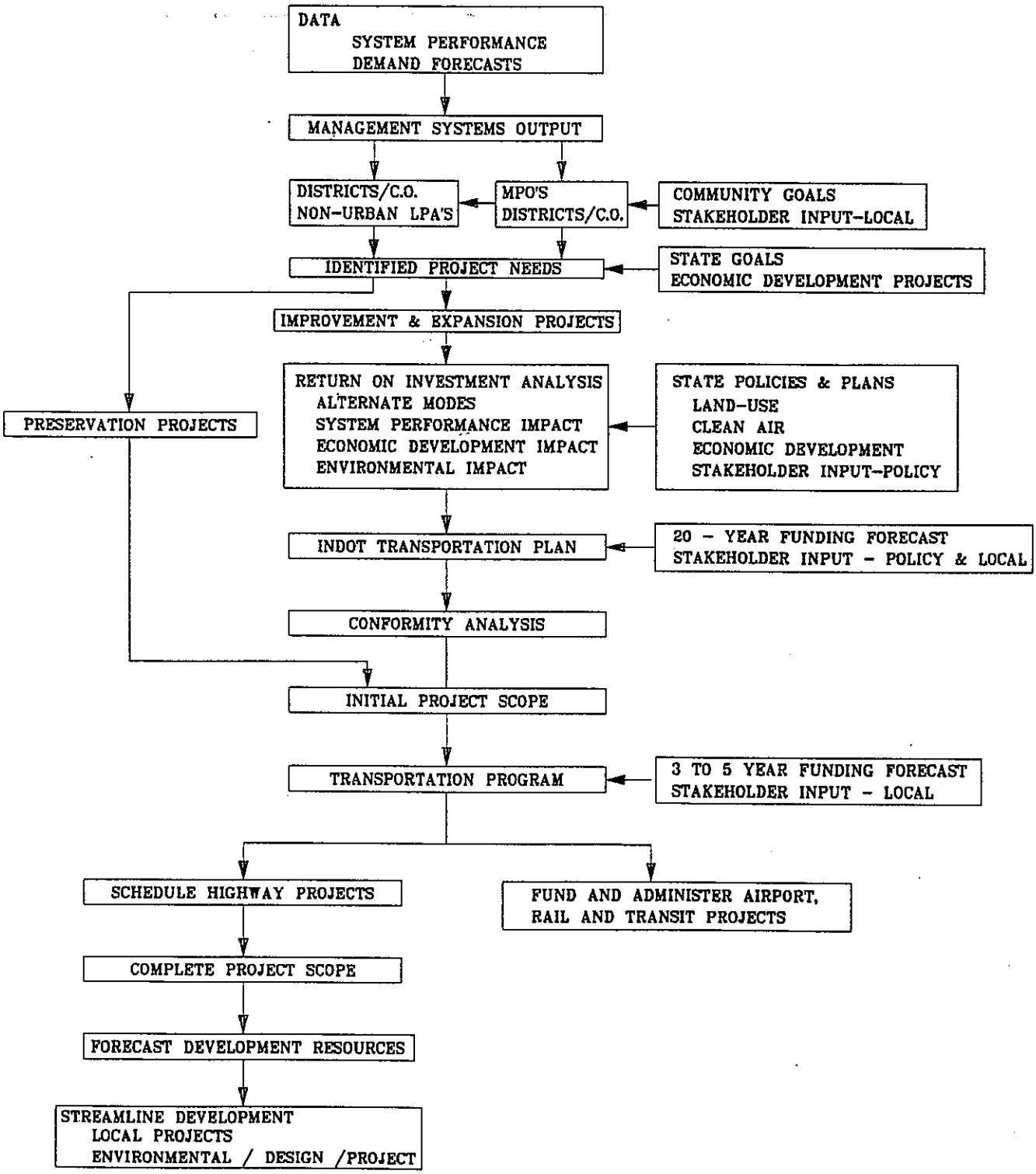
The Indiana Department of Transportation is currently developing a multimodal transportation planning process that focuses on providing the transportation infrastructure necessary to support the state's continued economic development. A number of initiatives are in progress to support the development of this planning process and the related programming of transportation improvements. **Figure 1** presents a flow chart of the 1995 Indiana Transportation Planning and Programming Process. As outlined in this chart, this process is largely determined by the state's multimodal system performance and demand forecasts as evaluated by the department's six (6) management systems. Output from the management systems will provide input into a statewide planning effort incorporating the policy direction from the statewide goals and objectives.

The planning process incorporates a wide range of input from the public and other stakeholders in the transportation system. It is structured to operate at the Metropolitan Planning Organization level in Indiana's large urban areas and at the district level in the state's rural areas. This process results in identified needs for both preservation and expansion/improvement projects. For expansion projects that provide additional capacity and enhanced accessibility for the transportation system, potential improvements are evaluated in terms of the return on investment principle. This evaluation process relies in part upon the traditional method of evaluation through minimizing user cost and also in part upon the more contemporary evaluation strategies oriented toward economic and environment benefits.

To assist in the development of this expanded ability to evaluate the user, economic, and environmental benefits of a transportation improvement, advisory committees have been formed to provide a better identification of state policies and plans. To better implement the direction of the advisory groups several systems planning studies, such as the *Major Corridor Investment-Benefit System Study* and the *Full Costing of Transportation Alternatives Study*, are under development to allow a more comprehensive return on investment analysis.

FIGURE 1

1995 INDIANA TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING PROCESS



These studies will result in prioritized sets of transportation improvements. These prioritized sets are evaluated in the context of statewide funding forecasts to provide a reasonable program of financially constrained transportation improvements. The selected transportation improvements are programmed for implementation by being placed in a production schedule. This schedule sets up the development process to move an improvement from concept to reality through engineering, design, and construction activities. A part of this production schedule that covers a three (3) year period is the Indiana Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (INSTIP).

Management Systems

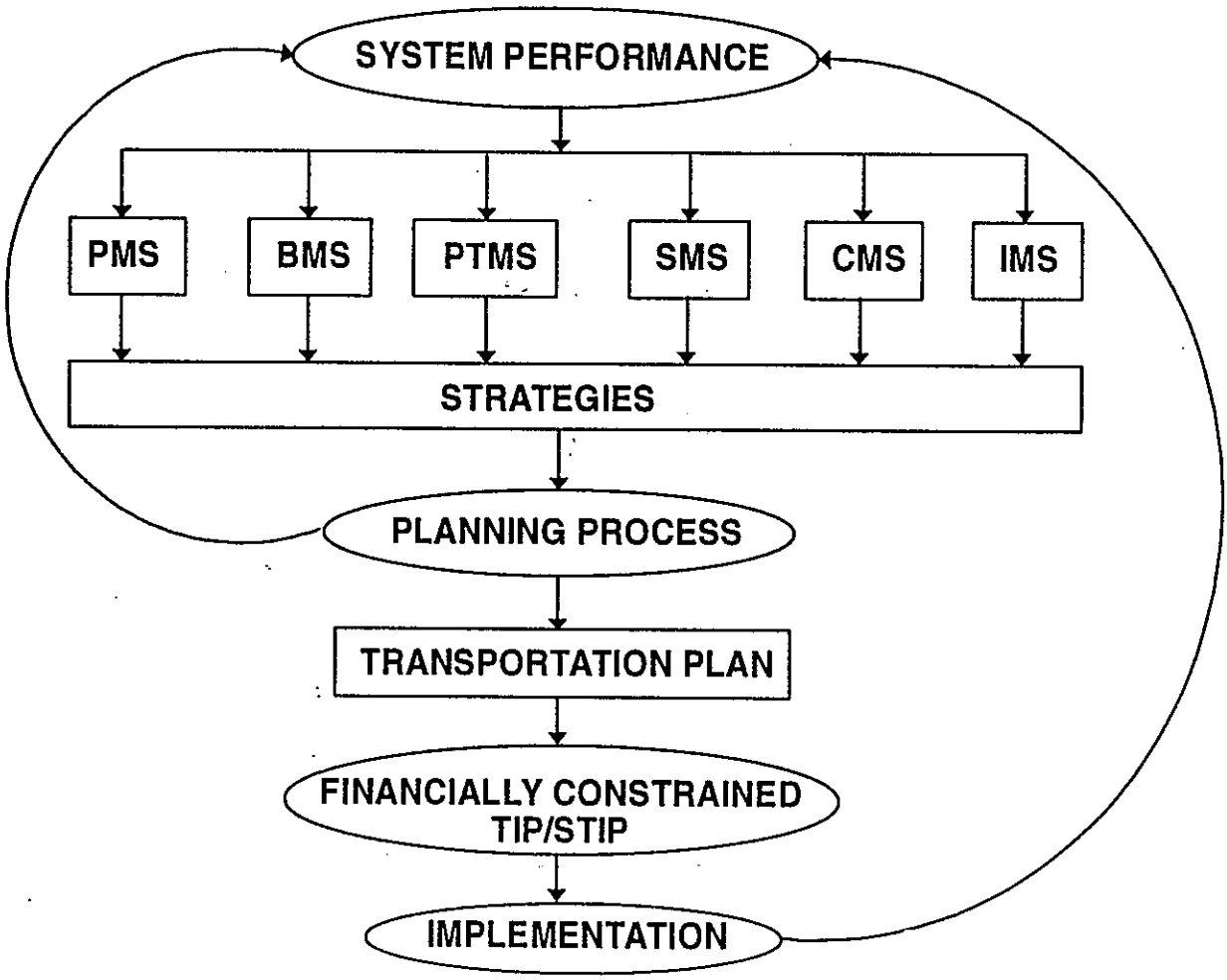
The *Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991* (ISTEA) requires the development of six (6) statewide transportation management systems and a traffic monitoring system to improve the efficiency and safety of the system and to protect public investment in the nation's infrastructure. The six (6) management systems required by this legislation are:

- Pavement Management System;
- Bridge Management System;
- Highway Safety Management System;
- Traffic Congestion Management System;
- Public Transportation Facilities and Equipment Management System, and;
- Intermodal Transportation Facilities and Systems Management System.

Project needs identified from the management systems will be added into the planning process for the selection of transportation improvement strategies and the project selection process. A flow chart illustrating the relationships between the management systems, the planning process, and the project selection process is shown in **Figure 2**. Currently only the pavement and bridge management elements are sufficiently developed by the Indiana Department of Transportation to provide input into the planning and programming system. Work is progressing on implementing the systems. In September 1994, work programs outlining the implementation steps and schedules for all management systems were formally submitted to FHWA.

FIGURE 2

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND THE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS



Advisory Committees

As noted above, advisory committees are used by the Indiana Department of Transportation to (1) better identify state policies and plans and (2) provide direction in the department's effort to evaluate improvements on the basis of return on investment. Several advisory committees are used, ranging from *ad hoc* groups to define issue areas and policy statements to standing committees that provide continuous input into the planning process. The Economic Infrastructure Group is comprised of INDOT and related state agencies concerned with the expansion of the state's economy. It also includes recognized university economic development resources and is focused on socio-economic forecasts and resulting travel demand estimates. The Environmental Analysis Group assists in the identification of environmental issues for consideration in the transportation planning process and coordination with other state and federal agencies.

System Planning Tools

Two initiatives underway at this time to provide system planning tools for a more comprehensive application of return on investment evaluation techniques are the *Major Corridor Investment-Benefit Analysis System Study* and the *Full Costing of Transportation Alternatives Study.*

The *Major Corridor Investment-Benefit Analysis System Study* attempts to better evaluate proposed transportation improvements using both a user benefit and economic benefit measure to be compared with the cost of a transportation investment. The study will also provide insight into the effects of local community initiatives into economic development programs and related infrastructure improvements (e.g., industrial park development with sewer and water) which would better capture the benefits of improved transportation accessibility. The major corridor study will include the development of a statewide travel demand forecast model that will consider statewide economic activity in forecasting future travel demand patterns. This information will be used to identify transportation system deficiencies and to evaluate alternative future year transportation system improvements. The study will also involve the development of an econometric input-output model to evaluate the economic impacts (e.g., business expansion, attraction of new business, and tourism related business) of alternative transportation improvements.

The *Full Costing of Transportation Alternatives Study* being conducted by the Indiana University Transportation Research Center will provide information on the hidden subsidies that can distort attempts to conduct uniform evaluations of alternative transportation improvements. This study will consider the full cost of

surface transportation modes through the identification of "other" costs such as insurance, depreciation, parking, and pollutant emissions that affect modal choice decisions but have traditionally not been considered in the past.

In addition to these system planning tools, INDOT's participation in the systems planning process being carried out in each of the state's twelve (12) urbanized areas by the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) should be emphasized. This cooperative transportation planning process involves the application of the MPO travel demand modeling processes in the selection and evaluation of transportation improvements on the state jurisdiction roadway system in each urbanized area.

Conformity Analysis is a major aspect of the transportation systems planning process being carried out in the MPO areas with air quality issues. The *Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990* (CAAA) and current metropolitan planning regulations require that transportation projects and plans of MPOs in non-attainment status must conform to State Implementation Plans (SIPs) for the attainment of air quality standards. The primary tool to demonstrate conformity are the MPO regional travel demand simulation models linked with an emissions modeling tool, such as the *Mobile 5A* air quality analysis model. This analysis takes place at the individual MPO level in a cooperative effort with INDOT, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Transportation Stakeholder and Public Involvement Process

The transportation stakeholder and public involvement process relating to the development of a statewide long-range multimodal transportation plan dates back to 1991 when INDOT participated with other state and federal agencies in the debate over legislation that eventually became the *Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991* (ISTEA). Before the legislation was signed into law, INDOT recognized that a multimodal orientation would require new efforts. The department therefore prepared in 1991 its first multimodal policy plan *Transportation in Indiana: A Look Ahead-Multimodal Strategies for the 1990s and Beyond* that addressed a wide range of multimodal, economic and environmental issues. In the summer of 1991, INDOT held six (6) statewide public forums on the multimodal transportation policy plan to allow public review and receive input into this planning process. One meeting was held in each of the six (6) INDOT districts to geographically cover the entire state. This initial policy planning effort shaped the department's approach to meeting the requirements of the ISTEA legislation when it was finally signed into law on December 18, 1991.

In 1992, the Indiana Department of Transportation focused its planning activities on the mandated reclassification of the highway functional classification system as the initial step in developing the National Highway System component for Indiana. In the summer of 1992, a meeting was held in each of the six (6) INDOT districts across the state with local elected officials and local governmental transportation officials to solicit their participation into the highway functional reclassification process. This process resulted in the identification of the proposed National Highway System for the State of Indiana. Three (3) statewide public forums were conducted in the spring of 1993 to present the recommended system to local elected officials, the public, and transportation providers for the surface transportation modes.

Also in 1993, multimodal transportation planning and *1994-1996 Indiana Statewide Transportation Improvement Program* (INSTIP) meetings were held in each of the six (6) INDOT districts. To achieve maximum public involvement two (2) meetings were scheduled at each location (2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.) to allow attendance of individuals unable to attend afternoon meetings. Maximum effort was also made in an outreach program to notify a wide variety of modal transportation representatives, local government officials, environmental, business, and other interest groups in addition to the general public. Each meeting provided an overview of statewide multimodal transportation systems (i.e., aviation, highways, public transportation and rail). Proposed transportation improvements were presented and discussed by the participants.

In the spring of 1994, INDOT's 1991 policy plan *Transportation in Indiana: A Look Ahead-Multimodal Strategies for the 1990s and Beyond* was internally reviewed and expanded to address current issues facing the State of Indiana and the Indiana Department of Transportation. The policy plan's original eight (8) issue areas were expanded to nine (9) to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian facilities planning. For each issue area, an *ad hoc* advisory working group was established by the department to provide expert opinion on the policy statements and policy strategies. Membership of the working groups included the department's professional staff, public, academic, private, and representatives.

In the summer of 1994, twelve (12) district-level public involvement meetings were held statewide to obtain comments on INDOT's proposed update of the multimodal policy plan, draft public involvement procedures, and the planning and selection process for modal transportation projects. Similar to the 1993 meetings, two (2) meetings were scheduled at each location (2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.) to allow for attendance of individuals unable to attend afternoon meetings.

As an element of each district meeting, concurrent information workshops were held to answer individual questions on (1) the draft multimodal policy plan, (2) draft public involvement procedures, (3) highway projects under development in each INDOT district, (4) information on the development of the department's management systems, (5) the environmental services offered by INDOT, and (6) the Transportation Enhancement Activities (TEA) program.

Throughout the summer of 1994, several of the INDOT districts also conducted planning meetings with local elected officials and interest groups on a sub-district or community level. In conjunction with the district-level transportation planning efforts, continuous effort was made to coordinate and participate in the comprehensive transportation planning process conducted by the state's twelve (12) Metropolitan Planning Organizations. Each Metropolitan Planning Organization has several INDOT liaisons that represent transportation planning and programming, intermodal transportation, and district activities. These INDOT liaisons attend Metropolitan Planning Organization technical and policy meetings, and participate in the MPO planning process including public involvement activities.

Following the twelve (12) public meetings held at the district level, INDOT used the last two weeks of August 1994 and the first two weeks of September 1994 to consider and evaluate all public comments on the draft multimodal policy plan, *Transportation In Indiana: Multimodal Issues, Policies and Strategies For The 1990's And Beyond.* A number of amendments were made to the draft multimodal policy plan as a consequence of these public comments. A response to comments on the INDOT draft Policy Plan is contained at the end of the revised Policy Plan chapter.

The amendment of the multimodal policy plan in September 1994 allowed INDOT to develop the balance of *Transportation In Indiana: Multimodal Plan Development For The 1990's And Beyond* as a draft statewide multimodal transportation plan. This document fully incorporates:

- INDOT's multimodal policy plan, *Transportation In Indiana: Multimodal Issues, Policies and Strategies For The 1990's And Beyond*;
- Information on air quality, the *Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990* and ISTEA;
- A profile of the Indiana economy and demographic change, particularly as they relate to transportation demand;

- A review of the transportation planning and stakeholder involvement processes;

- A discussion of INDOT's transportation infrastructure investment and funding policy;

- An overview of Indiana's transportation system, including "stand alone" statewide plans for the state's aviation system, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, ports and waterways (from the Indiana Port Commission), and public transit;

- Documentation of INDOT district office transportation planning activities;

- Documentation of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) planning process, and;

- Assessment of the twenty-three (23) statewide planning factors mandated under the ISTEA requirements.

The draft multimodal transportation plan described above, *Transportation In Indiana: Multimodal Plan Development For The 1990's And Beyond,* was internally completed at the end of October 1994. As the draft multimodal transportation plan neared completion, the department's Public Affairs Division mailed invitations to over nine hundred and ninety (990) transportation stakeholders to attend a Statewide Transportation Forum in Indianapolis on November 14, 1994. The general public of Indiana was notified through statewide news releases of the statewide transportation forum and offered an opportunity to attend.

Highlights of the November 14th Statewide Transportation Forum that was attended by approximately 150-200 persons included:

- Distribution of INDOT's draft statewide multimodal transportation plan, *Transportation In Indiana: Multimodal Plan Development For The 1990's And Beyond* with full incorporation of INDOT's revised and previously released transportation policy plan *Transportation In Indiana: Multimodal Issues, Policies and Strategies For The 1990's And Beyond*;

- A detailed review of long-range statewide multimodal policies and strategies for the 1990's and beyond;

- An overview of the statewide transportation planning process and the transportation policy plan;

- A public statement session that allowed transportation stakeholders and the general public to comment on transportation issues and concerns, and;

- A set of concurrent workshops designed to provide information and to answer questions on the development of INDOT's transportation management systems, multimodal transportation projects currently under development throughout Indiana, transportation planning tools, environmental services offered by INDOT, the Indiana University Transportation Research Center's Full Costing Evaluation Approach, and the opportunity to discuss the Transportation Enhancement Activities (TEA) program.

Transportation stakeholders and members of the general public attending the 1994 Transportation Forum were asked to review the draft statewide multimodal transportation plan, *Transportation In Indiana: Multimodal Plan Development For The 1990's And Beyond* and to provide INDOT with written review comments by no later than December 15, 1995. INDOT also sought to broaden public review and comment on the draft statewide multimodal transportation plan by mailing copies of the document to transportation stakeholders not present at the Transportation Forum. This mailing, coupled with the distribution of the plan at the November 14th forum, resulted in the statewide distribution of approximately four hundred and fifty (450) copies.

During the comment period for the draft version of *Transportation In Indiana: Multimodal Plan Development For The 1990's And Beyond,* extending from November 14 to December 15, 1994, INDOT received a number of informal questions and comments regarding the plan. All informal questions were answered. Nevertheless, transportation stakeholders who provided informal verbal comments on the plan were asked to submit formal written comments so the department could document areas of interest and/or potential concern. Several respondents subsequently provided INDOT with formal written comments. These comments are available for review at INDOT's central office.

As of December 21, 1994, INDOT's Transportation Planning Division had received a total of fifteen (15) formal review comment letters that addressed a wide variety of issues. Major comments and responses to these comments are noted below.

INDOT also developed in 1994 a draft *Indiana Department of Transportation Public Involvement Procedures Manual.* This manual was developed by a Public Involvement Task Group under the guidance of INDOT's Division of Public Affairs and in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration and the state's Metropolitan Planning Organizations.

The procedures outlined in the *Public Involvement Procedures Manual* are intended to (1) strengthen the existing public involvement process, (2) make sense to the public, (3) identify and address critical issues early in planning and project development stage, (4) minimize duplication of public involvement efforts, and (5) meets the need of the public and regulatory agencies to provide early and continuing input to the planning and project development process.

As required in the 23 CFR 450 Federal Regulations on Statewide Planning, the draft *Public Involvement Procedures Manual* received a formal forty-five (45) day public comment period. After minor corrections, the Indiana Department of Transportation's Public Involvement Procedures were approved by the Federal Highway Administration on November 17, 1994. A copy of the approved procedures will be fully incorporated into the final version of *Transportation In Indiana: Multimodal Plan Development For The 1990's And Beyond.*

Summary of Public Comments and Preliminary Responses On The Draft Multimodal Transportation Plan

As noted above, the Indiana Department of Transportation received (as of December 21, 1994) a total of fifteen (15) review comment letters on the draft multimodal transportation plan. The purpose of this section is to highlight several of the major comments and responses by INDOT. Formal detailed responses will be prepared for each letter. However, time constraints for submission of this document to the Federal Highway Administration before January 1, 1995 currently preclude the research needed for more thorough responses.

The following comments and responses are identified by the major issue orientation of the commenting stakeholders.

Rail/Highway Grade Crossing Safety

Comments: Several comments were made on the need for INDOT to emphasize rail/highway safety. Issues mentioned were (1) the need to consider additional funding for grade crossing improvements, and (2) the need to identify and pursue rail/highway grade crossing closures.

Response: INDOT will aggressively pursue the use of all available funding to meet identified needs. In addition, the issue of rail/highway grade crossing improvement needs and closures will receive additional study by INDOT in 1995. INDOT will continue to evaluate and identify priority hazard locations on the basis of statewide analyses.

Railroads - General

Comments: Several industry-related stakeholders indicated the need for a more detailed state rail planning section that would further address economic interrelationships and infrastructure needs.

Response: In 1995, the Department's Intermodal Division, railroad Section, will complete an update to the *1987 Indiana State Rail Plan*. This update will comprehensively address rail passenger and rail freight issues.

Transportation Safety Conflicts

Comments: Strong concern was expressed by the rail industry and other transportation stakeholders on the conceptual development of bicycling and pedestrian facilities in close proximity to active railroad operations and corridors. Concern was raised over safety and liability issues due to the mixture of joint use in a limited spatial environment.

Response: INDOT will review all proposed Transportation Enhancement Activity (TEA) bicycle and pedestrian improvements to ensure that inappropriate joint use of active rail corridors is avoided.

Economic Development and Land Uses

Comments: Several comments were received on the need to consider economic issues as they relate to the aviation, highway, rail, port, and transit modes. Issues mentioned were (1) the overemphasis on the economic contribution of the highway mode, and (2) the need to consider the balance between economic development benefits and the preservation of environmental quality.

Response: INDOT will undertake a number of activities in 1995 to better balance economic and environmental issues. A major activity area will be the preparation of a *Major Investment Studies* to evaluate transportation improvements on a corridor or sub-area level and address modal alternatives, improvement feasibility, and environmental impacts in greater detail. This ISTEA required Metropolitan Planning Organization activity is intended to create an open participatory process to identify alternatives, determine the evaluation criteria, and select a preferred strategy. Alternative strategies will be considered in a systems context as well as the corridor/sub-area level in order to address such factors such as the impact on system performance, financial resources, environmental consequences, and air quality. INDOT is adopting the major investment study concept for major transportation improvements in both urban and rural areas.

INDOT's Intermodal Transportation Management System will evaluate the economic contributions of non-highway modes. This study will consider the reduction in business operating costs and the resulting economic impact due to modal transportation improvements, such as double-stack rail operations.

Intermodal Solutions

Comments: A number of comments were received that stressed the need for a stronger INDOT focus on intermodal transportation versus multimodal transportation.

Response: In 1995, INDOT will develop its Intermodal Management System under the guidelines of an Intermodal Management System advisory Group comprising a representative sample of Indiana's transportation stakeholders. This Group will provide a balanced multimodal focus toward the development of the Intermodal Management System.

Public Participation

Comments: Comments were received on the need for opportunities for the public to comment on transportation plans and proposals, and for clear public input guidelines.

Response: INDOT's Division of Public Affairs, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration and the state's

Metropolitan Planning Organizations, developed Public Involvement Procedures. These procedures were formally adopted by INDOT after receiving Federal Highway Administration approval on November 17, 1994. These procedures received a formal forty-five (45) public review.

Infrastructure Investments

Comments: A wide variety of comments were received under the infrastructure investment topic. Several of these addressed the need to consider the "full cost" approach when conducting return on investment analyses. Another area concerned the balance between investments for maintenance and preservation versus the addition of transportation system capacity for future growth.

Response: In 1995, INDOT will complete the study of the *Full Cost Analysis of Alternative Transportation Modes.* This study will examine regional corridor alternatives of (1) new highways, (2) major highway improvements, (3) intercity bus service (4) light rail passenger service, (5) high-speed rail passenger service, (6) regular rail passenger service, and (7) intercity air service. This study is attempting to incorporate user costs and to value externalities (e.g., environmental pollution costs, crashes not covered by insurance, and others). The department will then attempt to incorporate the results of the Full Costing Analysis into corridor evaluations.

As a part of the continuing statewide planning process, parts of the roadway and bridge management systems will be used to better identify preservation and maintenance costs of the transportation system. In conjunction with this effort, INDOT will review system expansion needs using information from both the congestion management system and the *Major Corridor Investment-Benefit Analysis Study.* This last study will provide information on the potential economic development impacts of proposed system expansion improvements.